

SECRET

27 September 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: AECOB Exfiltration Operation

1. Negotiations with [] were successfully completed on 27 August with [] agreeing to provide all the support requested of them and tentative target date of 4 August was set for the operation. It was necessary, however, to set this back when a message was received from CAMBARO/2 reporting that the original LZ (landing zone) no longer usable and that the details on a new LZ enroute by S/W.

2. Pending the receipt of the necessary details regarding the new LZ, traffic was passed to CAMBARO/2 reviewing the procedures to be employed on the ground by the reception party.

3. Inasmuch as the two agents scheduled for exfiltration had had no contact with each other since the fall of 1954 and had no means available for establishing independent contact [] had been instructed to select a secure meeting site and transmit the details by S/W. The next subsequent message from [] indicated he had not monitored our broadcast and was unaware of our requirement for a meeting site. It was therefore necessary to instruct CAMBARO/2 to select a site and report by W/T. This information was received on 26 August.

4. CAMBARO/2's message with the details on the new LZ was received at Frankfurt on 6 September and a firm date of 10 September for the operation was decided on. CAMBARO/2 was notified of this date on 6 September by means of a special broadcast. Both [] and CAMBARO/2 were instructed to establish contact with each other on the following day. [] was instructed to cease monitoring his daily 1300 Z broadcasts and cache his W/T set inasmuch as any traffic for him could be received by CAMBARO/2 during the latter's daily 1100 Z broadcasts.

5. In a W/T message received from CAMBARO/2 on 7 September, he reported establishing contact with [] and gave the weather information requested of him. A second weather report was received from him on 9 September. Because of heavy interference, however, it was too garbled to be of any value. During the daily 1100 Z broadcast on 9 September the agent was instructed to change his location and set up a black W/T base at the LZ in time to receive our 10 September transmission.

6. On 7 September, the container of operational equipment and a VHF W/T set for use between [] and Bornholm were dispatched to COS [] by means of a special USAFE flight.

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

SECRET

Declassified and Approved for Release
by the Central Intelligence Agency
Date: 2003

EXEMPTIONS Section 3(b)
(2)(A) Privacy ☐
(2)(B) Methods/Sources ☒
(2)(G) Foreign Relations ☐

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This information plus the agent's weather report was immediately broadcast to Bornholm, whereupon the specific briefing of the crew was begun.

15. At 1930 Z a USAF C-54 took off from Wiesbaden AFB for Copenhagen. This aircraft arrived in the area NE of Bornholm shortly after the L-20's take-off and orbited at 12,000 feet in order to provide a commo link between Limber, Bornholm and the L-20. It, as well as the L-20, were under continuous monitor both by Limber and Bornholm. When it was judged the L-20 had passed its maximum reception range, the C-54 turned for Copenhagen, landing there at 2200 Z. It now stood by at Copenhagen awaiting the return of the L-20 crew and passengers.

16. Since weather conditions were still favorable, "QRU" (no traffic) was transmitted to the agent during the final broadcast at 2000 Z. The [] was in position and on picket duty, and a [] PFY was standing by at the Bornholm []. The mission aircraft's Air Force insignia and serial numbers were attached to it by a special arrangement utilizing DZEUS fasteners. Their unobtrusive removal immediately prior to take-off was readily accomplished and was facilitated by the fact that Ronne airport shuts down all operations at sundown and the only outside person present in the area was the airport manager who was occupied in operating the control tower. Take-off occurred at 2037 Z.

17. Agency personnel equipped with duplicate sets of Air Force insignias and serial numbers for the mission aircraft were standing by at Copenhagen and at Bremerhaven in the event the L-20 was forced to land at either field because of weather on its return. A duplicate L-20 was standing by at Wiesbaden and arrangements had been made to file an arrival report from Bornholm for it in the event the mission aircraft went down over target.

18. The mission aircraft returned to Bornholm at 0419 Z without landing at the target area. A debriefing of the navigator and pilot indicated that the route had been flown as planned, but because of heavy turbulence enroute the aircraft had not arrived over the LZ until 0011 Z. Although they reported seeing lights on an open field, they were not in the proper L pattern nor was a recognition signal given. The crew had concluded that this could not be the intended LZ and spent approximately 25 minutes flying around the general area in search of a light pattern. No identifiable light pattern was observed, and the aircraft returned to base leaving the target area coast at 0111 Z.

19. A W/T message was received from CAMBARO/2 at 1300 Z 11 September, reporting that he and his reception party had been in place at the LZ the previous night from 2200 Z to 0200 Z. No aircraft had been seen, but had been faintly heard far to the north of the LZ at 0015 Z. The party's lights had then been turned on and the recognition signal given without, however, attracting the aircraft. This message, as well as all the previous ones received contained all available indicators properly given to show freedom from control.

20. Inasmuch as the two versions of what occurred at the LZ were at wide divergence, the pilot and navigator were subjected to a further detailed debriefing and extensive polygraph interrogation. The conclusions arrived at as a result of this procedure were that there was no deliberate deception involved on their part, moreover it was further concluded that they were both honestly convinced that no navigational error had been made and both believed that they had arrived over the intended LZ.

21. Since the circumstances of the case do not in any readily conceivable way fit into the pattern of possible RIE control, it is felt to be quite possible that the pilot and particularly the navigator, did in fact make an error in navigation despite their honest belief to the contrary. From a careful study of the facts, it is possible to conclude that the aircraft was over an area resembling the LZ and further to locate the specific spot which they could have mistaken for the LZ. That they mistook this particular location for the LZ is compatible with other facts known to us.

22. Full details on everything that transpired on the night of the OP have been independently requested from CAMEARO/2 and []. Upon the receipt of this information and the completion of its analysis in conjunction with the debriefing reports of the crew, an effort will be made to reconcile any remaining discrepancy. Our tentative recommendation is that consideration be given to making a second attempt in early October 1955 to exfiltrate the two agents. No final recommendation, however, will be made pending completion of our investigation and analysis at which time it is probable that we will be in a position to make a more definitive recommendation for a future course of action.

[]
Latvian Section